2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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302 maidens receive in the way of touching up eyebrows, artfully swelling out the sadôn with false locks of hair, intertwining the raven tresses with red and white fragrant flowers, toning the complexion with thana'ka, and so on. The young men look on critically while the princess scans herself in the little hand-mirror and tranquilly completes the touching-up and other feminine mysteries so little dreamed of by ordinary European swains. No one has the slightest appearance of recognising the ludicrousness of the thing, or of deprecating the exposure of little female wiles and vanities. The zat-thamā wears her acting skirt indeed when she arrives, but everything else—the tight-fitting lace jacket, the stiff brocaded wings, the jewellery, the pagoda-like crown—is put on by the side of the stage at the bamboo rack which supports the masks and necessary changes of dress. The audience either looks on with stolid earnestness, or takes no notice whatever.

Finally, having smoked all through the toilette, the princess and the maids of honour quietly seat themselves—squat would be more accurate, but does not sound nice—at the edge of the pwè-waing, and continue to smoke till everything is ready and their call comes. Then they simply stand up and are on the stage immediately. They do not cease smoking then, except during a long song. The men are equally calm. The king chews betel and salivates copiously between observations or speeches, but in so doing he can
545 only be said to be the more realistic. Incidental ballets are introduced to relieve the monotony of the dialogue, and the maids of honour and the clowns perform wonderful feats of winding themselves about as if they had no bones, picking up coins with the mouth bent back to the ground, doubling themselves up so that the toes touch the forehead, and so on.

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● 579 Sometimes there are great fights at these pwès. A young man has got surly because there is such a crowd that he can see nothing of what is going on, and runs up against another equally inclined to quarrel for the same reason. Or perhaps he is angry because some one has supplanted him in a flirtation with one of the girls who have established a temporary bazaar in the outskirts of the crowd. Or there may be a dispute as to the ownership of a mat. There are a few loud words; a woman's voice joins in. Next minute

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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the two are smashing away at one another with their long hair streaming over their faces and down their shoulders. Friends join in, and almost before you can realise what has happened, the actors disappear, the women and children run off home, and the street is filled with an excited crowd of men swaying backwards and forwards, and fighting promiscuously. For this reason pwès are now never allowed in towns without permission from the civil authority, and numbers of policemen are always at hand to nip any riot in the bud. With the same object performances are only allowed in large towns about the time of the full moon, when there is abundance of light, in case the street lamps should be put out. The worst row of the kind I ever saw, however, was started by two of the Burman policemen themselves. They quarrelled about the merits of two apyodaws, talented *danseuses*, and the crowd, relishing the absurdity of the thing, backed up the quarrel with such energy that broken heads were plentiful and a ward in the infirmary was filled.

Foreigners very often make the mistake of taking the performances of children's companies to be actual zāt plays. Even Captain Forbes, usually so accurate, falls into this error in speaking of a representation of the Wethandaya zāt. This must simply have been a yein, an adaptation of the great drama for performance by the little choral dancers. For people who do not understand Burmese well—among whom, of course, the late Captain Forbes was certainly not to be included—the mistake is very easy. They are far prettier to look at, and much preferable in every way to the actual text of the birth-story, mainly because they are not so dismally drawn out, and can ordinarily be got through in an evening.

The dramas are all founded on the tales which Shin Gautama told of five hundred and ten of his previous existences, or on events in the lives of kings and heroes in India. None of them are original. The story in every instance is taken from the Hindoo, the adapter in most cases not even taking the trouble to nationalise the names of places and characters. It is only in the extemporising of the clown that anything really characteristic comes out. The Hindoo sense of humour is vastly inferior to the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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CHAPTER XXXVIII

GAMES

A VERY favourite game with Burmans of all ages is the gônnyinto pwè. The name is very suggestive. Gôn or hkôn means to jump, and nyin is to deny or bluster, and there is no doubt of the fitness of the implication. A more noisy and contentious game, not even omitting the uproariousness of the English enormities known as grab or pit, it would be difficult to find. Most writers on Burma have passed over gônnyinwaing lightly, as a simple, harmless, children's game. It would be well if it were only that, though the monks at the pôngyi kyaung often sally forth in great wrath (most dangerous for their future state), and armed with a stout bamboo, to put a stop to the clamorous disputes of the schoolboys over their seeds. But the police officers would tell a very different tale. Grown-up men play also, the quarrels sometimes end in assault and murder, and always in reckless gambling. Beinshu, opium-eaters, who with all respectable Burmans stand for types of iniquity, a kind of epitome of vice, often have as much as two or three hundred rupees on a single game, and the results of unrestrained gambling are best known to civilised people who frequent Monte Carlo. Consequently the police keep a sharp eye on grown-up gônnyinto players, and if a party is caught, they are all punished heavily for gambling, the daing, or keeper of the ground, being fined heaviest of all. For there are regular alleys kept for the purpose, the daing, or proprietor, carefully smoothing the ground, moistening it delicately in the hot weather, and keeping it from getting sodden during the monsoon. He charges his customers a small fee for the right to play, usually an anna in the rupee,

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16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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with the base on the river, and the hill as apex. On the hill were some monasteries of teak, from which the monks had been ejected, and three hundred Ghurkas were in garrison there. A strong fence ran from the hill to the river like two arms, and there were three gates, one just by the hill, and one on each end of the river face.

Behind Shemmaga the country was under the rule of a robber chief called Maung Yaing, who could raise from among the peasants some two hundred or three hundred men, armed mostly with flint-locks. He had been in the king's time a brigand with a small number of followers, who defied or eluded the local authorities, and lived free in quarters among the most distant villages. Like many a robber chief in our country and elsewhere, he was liked rather than hated by the people, for his brutalities were confined to either strangers or personal enemies, and he was open-handed and generous. We look upon things now with different eyes to what we did two or three hundred years ago, but I dare say Maung Yaing was neither better nor worse than many a hero of ours long ago. He was a fairly good fighter, and had a little experience fighting the king's troops; and so it was very natural, when the machinery of government fell like a house of cards, and some leaders were wanted, that the young men should crowd to him, and put themselves under his orders. He had usually with him forty or fifty men, but he could, as I have said, raise five or six times as many for any particular service, and keep them together for a few days. He very soon discovered that he and his men were absolutely no match for our troops.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

In two or three attempts that he made to oppose the troops he was signally worsted, so he was obliged to change his tactics. He decided to boycott the enemy. No Burman was to accept service under him, to give him information or supplies, to be his guide, or to assist him in any way. This rule Maung Yaing made generally known, and he announced his intention of enforcing it with rigour. And he did so. There was a head man of a village near Shemmaga whom he executed because he had acted as guide to a body of troops, and he cut off all supplies from the interior, lying on the roads, and stopping all men from entering Shemmaga. He further issued a notice that the inhabitants of Shemmaga itself should leave the town. They could not move the garrison, therefore the people must move themselves. No assistance must be given to the enemy. The villagers of Shemmaga, mostly small traders in salt and rice, were naturally averse to leaving. This trade was their only means of livelihood, the houses their only homes, and they did not like the idea of going out into the unknown country behind. Moreover, the exaction by Maung Yaing of money and supplies for his men fell most heavily on the wealthier men, and on the whole they were not sorry to have the English garrison in the town, so that they could trade in peace. Some few left, but most did not, and though they collected money, and sent it to Maung Yaing, they at the same time told the English officer in command of Maung Yaing's threats, and begged that great care should be taken of the town, for Maung Yaing was very angry. When he found he could not cause the

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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abandonment of the town, he sent in word to say that he would burn it. Not three hundred foreigners, nor three thousand, should protect these lazy, unpatriotic folk from his vengeance. He gave them till the new moon of a certain month, and if the town were not evacuated by that time he declared that he would destroy it. He would burn it down, and kill certain men whom he mentioned, who had been the principal assistants of the foreigners. This warning was quite public, and came to the ears of the English officer almost at once. When he heard it he laughed.

He had three hundred men, and the rebels had three hundred. His were all magnificently trained and drilled troops, men made for war; the Burmans were peasants, unarmed, untrained. He could have defeated three thousand of them, or ten times that number, with his little force, and so, of course, he could if he met them in the open; no one knew that better, by bitter experience, than Maung Yaing. The villagers, too, knew, but nevertheless they were stricken with fear, for Maung Yaing was a man of his word. He was as good as his threat.

One night, at midnight, the face of the fort where the Ghurkas lived on the hill was suddenly attacked. Out of the brushwood near by a heavy fire was opened upon the breastwork, and there was shouting and beating of gongs. So all the Ghurkas turned out in a hurry, and ran to man the breastwork, and the return fire became hot and heavy. In a moment, as it seemed, the attackers were in the village. They had burst in the north gate by the river face, killed the guard on it, and streamed in.

16:Fielding Hall G-8 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

They lit torches from a fire they found burning, and in a moment the village was on fire. Looking down from the hill, you could see the village rushing into flame, and in the lurid light men and women and children running about wildly. There were shouts and screams and shots. No one who has never heard it, never seen it, can know what a village is like when the enemy has burst in at night. Everyone is mad with hate, with despair, with terror. They run to and fro, seeking to kill, seeking to escape being killed. No one can tell one from another. The bravest man is dismayed. And the noise is like a great moan coming out of the night, pierced with sharp cries. It rises and falls, like the death-cry of a dying giant. It is the most terrible sound in the world. It makes the heart stop.

To the Ghurkas this sight and sound came all of a sudden, as they were defending what they took to be a determined attack on their own position. The village was lost ere they knew it was attacked. And two steamers full of troops, anchored off the town, saw it, too. They were on their way up country, and had halted there that night, anchored in the stream. They were close by, but could not fire, for there was no telling friend from foe.

And before the relief party of Ghurkas could come swarming down the hill, only two hundred yards, before the boats could land the eager troops from the steamers, the rebels were gone. They went through the village and out of the south gate. They had fulfilled their threat and destroyed the town. They had killed the men they had declared they would kill. The firing died away from the fort side,

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

and the enemy were gone, no one could tell whither, into the night.

Such a scene of desolation as that village was next day! It was all destroyed—every house. All the food was gone, all furniture, all clothes, everything, and here and there was a corpse in among the blackened cinders. The whole countryside was terror-stricken at this failure to defend those who had depended on us.

I do not think this was a particularly gallant act, but it was a very able one. It was certainly war. It taught us a very severe lesson—more severe than a personal reverse would have been. It struck terror in the countryside. The memory of it hampered us for very long; even now they often talk of it. It was a brutal act—that of a brigand, not a soldier.

But there was no want of courage. If these men, inferior in number, in arms, in everything, could do this under the lead of a robber chief, what would they not have done if well led, if well trained, if well armed?

Of desperate encounters between our troops and the insurgents I could tell many a story. I have myself seen such fights. They nearly always ended in our favour—how could it be otherwise?

There was Ta Te, who occupied a pagoda enclosure with some eighty men, and was attacked by our mounted infantry. There was a long fight in that hot afternoon, and very soon the insurgents' ammunition began to fail, and the pagoda was stormed. Many men were killed, and Ta Te, when his men were nearly all dead, and his ammunition quite expended, climbed up the pagoda wall, and twisted off

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

naturally enough they joined our columns when we advanced in that direction, hoping to be replaced. They were replaced, the father as governor under the direction of an English magistrate, and the son as his assistant. They were only kept there by our troops, and upheld in authority by our power against Wuntho. But they were desired by many of their own people, and so, perhaps, they could hardly be called traitors, as many of those who joined us were. The father was a useless old man, but his son, he of whom I speak, was brave and honourable, good tempered and courteous, beyond most men whom I have met. It was well known that he was the real power behind his father. It was he who assisted us in an attempt to quell the insurrections and catch the raiders that troubled our peace, and many a time they tried to kill him, many a time to murder him as he slept.

There was a large gang of insurgents who came across the Mu River one day, and robbed one of his villages, so a squadron of cavalry was sent in pursuit. We travelled fast and long, but we could not catch the raiders. We crossed the Mu into unknown country, following their tracks, and at last, being without guides, we camped that night in a little monastery in the forest. At midnight we were attacked. A road ran through our camp, and there was a picket at each end of the road, and sentries were doubled.

It was just after midnight that the first shot was fired. We were all asleep when a sudden volley was poured into the south picket, killing one sentry and wounding another. There was no time to dress,

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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and we ran down the steps as we were (in sleeping dresses), to find the men rapidly falling in, and the horses kicking at their pickets. It was pitch-dark. The monastery was on a little cleared space, and there was forest all round that looked very black. Just as we came to the foot of the steps an outbreak of firing and shouts came from the north, and the Burmese tried to rush our camp from there; then they tried to rush it again from the south, but all their attempts were baffled by the steadiness of the pickets and the reinforcements that were running up. So the Burmese, finding the surprise ineffectual, and that the camp could not be taken, spread themselves about in the forest in vantage places, and fired into the camp. Nothing could be seen except the dazzling flashes from their guns as they fired here and there, and the darkness was all the darker for those flashes of flame, that cut it like swords. It was very cold. I had left my blanket in the monastery, and no one was allowed to ascend, because there, of all places, the bullets flew thickest, crushing through the mat walls, and going into the teak posts with a thud. There was nothing we could do. The men, placed in due order about the camp, fired back at the flashes of the enemy's guns. That was all they had to fire at. It was not much guide. The officers went from picket to picket encouraging the men, but I had no duty; when fighting began my work as a civilian was at a standstill. I sat and shivered with cold under the monastery, and wished for the dawn. In a pause of the firing you could hear the followers hammering the pegs that held the foot-ropes of the horses. Then the dead

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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and wounded were brought and put near me, and in the dense dark the doctor tried to find out what injuries the men had received, and dress them as well as he could. No light dare be lit. The night seemed interminable. There were no stars, for a dense mist hung above the trees. After an hour or two the firing slackened a little, and presently, with great caution, a little lamp, carefully shrouded with a blanket, was lit. A sudden burst of shots that came splintering into the posts beside us caused the lamp to be hurriedly put out; but presently it was lit again, and with infinite caution one man was dressed. At last a little very faint silver dawn came gleaming through the tree-tops—the most beautiful sight I ever saw—and the firing stopped. The dawn came quickly down, and very soon we were able once more to see what we were about, and count our losses.

Then we moved out. We had hardly any hope of catching the enemy, we who were in a strange country, who were mounted on horses, and had a heavy transport, and they who knew every stream and ravine, and had every villager for a spy. So we moved back a march into a more open country, where we hoped for better news, and two days later that news came.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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776 alone about midway between the river and the Shan
823 Mountains. It is thus very conspicuous, having no hills near it to share its majesty; and being in sight from all the old capitals, it is very well known in history and legend. It is covered with dense forest, and the villages close about are few. At the top there is a crater with a broken side, and a stream comes flowing out of this break down the mountain. Probably it was the denseness of its forests, the abundance of water, and its central position, more
● [579] than its guardian Nats, that made it for so many years the last retreating-place of the half-robber, half-patriot bands that made life so uneasy for us. But the Nats of Popa Mountains are very famous.

776 When any foreigner was taken into the service
695 of the King of Burma he had to swear an oath of
823 fidelity. He swore upon many things, and among them were included 'all the Nats in Popa.' No Burman would have dared to break an oath sworn in such a serious way as this, and they did not imagine that anyone else would. It was and is a very dangerous thing to offend the Popa Nats; for they are still there in the mountain, and everyone who goes there must do them reverence.

776 A friend of mine, a police officer who was en-
823 gaged in trying to catch the last of the robber chiefs
[782] who hid near Popa, told me that when he went up the mountain shooting, he, too, had to make offerings. Some way up there is a little valley dark with overhanging trees, and a stream flows slowly along it. It is an enchanted valley, and if you look closely you will see that the stream is not as other streams, for it flows uphill. It comes rushing into

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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370. HEADMAN MUSTERING HIS VILLAGERS.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL

WITH alien races planted on his soil and the watchful rivalry of the Taláing to contend with, the Burman had hourly need to guard his camp. Besides the enemies without, and their potential allies within, brigand bands of his own race had to be held in check. The chronic wars of Burman and Taláing (Mun), who were separated by no natural frontier, have left their record in the stockaded villages between Prome and Mimbu, a no-man's-land in which soldiers were impressed to fight, now on this side, now on that, and where, on being disbanded, they continued the plunder by which the armies subsisted in war. The traditions of brigandage and the exploits of noted leaders are remembered, and such enterprises are still a resort of the *vaurien* of a village or country-side when they perceive their chance—*damyá-taik sádya!* These brigands (*damyá*, gang-robbers, dacoits) lay their plans to surprise a village while the men are away at work or endeavour to create a panic by a night attack and so obtain their booty without risk of an encounter. An occasional gang might

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371. BURMAN OUTPOST STOCKADE.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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372. VILLAGE ELDERS IN CONCLAVE.

disperse as quickly as it was recruited or else it might develop into a band under a regular leader (*Bô*) and become the scourge of the country, rapidly attacking points separated by days' journeys. Against such bands the villagers combine and keep guard; torches are ready for night alarms. But when the brigands are too strong, the villagers have no choice but to enter into league with them and pay blackmail if they would not experience the horrors of barbarous war. At present brigandage is of very sporadic occurrence. Travellers are perfectly safe.

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Throughout Burma every man was liable to serve in war. He would have his own sabre and pike and would be provided with musket and ammunition, but no further accoutrements. Latterly the king's body-guards wore a sort of uniform (No. 9). Cannon are mentioned as early as 1350, and a century later, matchlocks were in use. Cæsar Frederick in 1569 speaks of pikes and arquebuses and good cannon. When disbanded, the soldiers had to surrender their muskets, but numbers were smuggled away, to add to the rigour of the guerilla waged by brigands and the severity of the villagers' retaliation.

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373. BURMAN OFFICIAL RECEIVING APPLICANTS.

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The military leader is called *Bô;* the civil governor or minister of the king, *Wun*, which means a burden or trust. The former might be a young man, the latter but rarely so. Age and influence are almost synonymous in Burma. If the elders—headmen, *lôdyi*—are agreed upon a thing, it is done. The village elders represent the fundamental substratum of government in Burma. They are consulted by the officials on matters affecting the people, whose natural, if unofficial,